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SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO:  
2008 COUNTRY REPORT ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 120019

1. (U) Following is post's submission for the 2008 Country Reports on Terrorism. The point of contact at post for this issue is Political Officer Steele Means (meansjs@state.gov).

2. (U) Begin 2008 Country Reports on Terrorism submission.

There is no credible evidence to indicate the presence of al-Qa'ida or other foreign Sunni-inspired terrorist groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The DRC Lebanese expatriate community, which numbers in the low thousands and is overwhelmingly Shia Muslim, does include many Hizballah adherents. Several families prominently linked elsewhere to Hizballah fundraising are running businesses in the DRC. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Hizballah is planning or running terrorist operations inside or via the DRC. Additionally, the level of support for Hizballah in the DRC is unknown.

Host government capacity to monitor and disrupt terrorist threats is extremely limited due to lack of resources, mismanagement, and unfamiliarity with the issue. The DRC's porous borders, endemic corruption, and overall lack of state authority could provide ample exploitable opportunities for designated foreign terrorist organizations, though such activity to date appears to remain theoretical. Post is not aware that the DRC provides support of any type to designated foreign terrorist organizations.

The two principal foreign armed groups operating in the DRC and posing a threat to security and stability are the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (known by its French acronym FDLR) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The FDLR, which includes former soldiers and supporters of the regime which orchestrated the 1994 Rwanda genocide, continues to operate with relative impunity in parts of North and South Kivu provinces. While no longer the military threat to the current Rwandan government that it once was, the FDLR contributes to the destabilization of the area through its continued promulgation of anti-Tutsi propaganda and through its cruel treatment of the local civilian population. Additionally, a unit from a former incarnation of the FDLR known as the Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALIR) was responsible for the killing of a group of American and British tourists in Bwindi Park in Uganda in 1999, which led to the placement of ALIR on the Terrorist Exclusion List.

The LRA continues to use its safe haven in northeastern DRC to wage its longstanding insurgency against the Ugandan government, which has resulted in a further destabilization of the security and human rights situation in eastern DRC. LRA exactions against the civilian population in the area, including kidnappings, looting, and forced conscription and sexual servitude, have resulted in massive internal displacement and a burgeoning humanitarian crisis.

The DRC's Regional Nuclear Studies Center at Kinshasa (CREN-K) still hosts two TRIGA nuclear reactors at the University of Kinshasa, roughly 20 miles from the center of the city. Although one reactor was shut down in 1972 and the other has been inoperable for 10

years, the CREN-K facility still stores about 60 spent nuclear fuel rods, about 70 live nuclear fuel rods, and about 10 fresh fuel rods.

There have been some recent improvements in infrastructure at CREN-K, but the fuel remains both a security and safety threat. The security threat of uranium ore in southern DRC remains mitigated by the 2004 Presidential decree banning all uranium mining, including that of artisanal miners. If the government lifted the decree and uranium mining in the DRC expanded beyond the small-scale illegal artisanal mining, the illicit export of uranium from the DRC could pose a security threat.

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